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SUBJECT: BRAZIL REQUESTS MORE HELP IN HONDURAS

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Classified By: Charge d' Affaires, a.i. Lisa Kubiske, reason: 1.4 (b) a
nd (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Brazil's Ministry of External Relations (MRE) Head of Mexico and Central America Division First Secretary Renato de Avila Viana told Poloff on September 24 that while the immediate threat to the Brazilian Embassy in Honduras has diminished, the GOB needs assistance getting their personnel, and potentially OAS and other international community intermediaries, in and out of the Brazilian Embassy in Honduras and in communication with Zelaya and the current Honduran government. UK Embassy counterparts at the same time met with MRE Head of Central America and Caribbean Department Ambassador Goncalo Mello Mourao and were told that the GOB has not asked the United States for any specific assistance and believe that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was behind Zelaya's appearance at the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa.
End Summary.

BRAZILIAN EMBASSY WELCOMED ZELAYA WITH OPEN ARMS

¶2. (C) According to Viana, while the GOB and Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa had no hand in, or previous warning of, Zelaya's surprise appearance at their door, MRE leadership welcomed him into the Embassy. Viana explained that Zelaya reached Tegucigalpa by land and that it was a Congress member in Honduras, who supports Zelaya, who first entered into contact with the Brazilian Embassy. They were informed that the ousted First Lady wanted to meet with the Brazilians in the Embassy, which they communicated back to Brasilia, and Under Secretary for Latin America Amb. Enio Cordeiro approved her entrance into the Embassy. The former First Lady appeared at the Embassy with Zelaya and it was Secretary-General (Deputy FM) Amb. Samuel Pinheiro Guimaraes who gave the approval for Zelaya to enter, because the GOB supports Zelaya, explained Viana.

¶3. (C) Viana was the one who communicated these approvals to the Brazilian Embassy and was the first to speak with Zelaya once he entered and said to the President, "our Embassy is your house, bien venido." According to Viana, Zelaya responded, "Thank you for your government's continued support since I was kicked out. This is my official return to my country and I am ready to announce that I am back." MRE

officials then called Brazilian President Lula, who was on the plane to New York to meet with the UN, who said the situation was to be kept a secret until Chavez and Zelaya announced Zelaya's return publicly, which occurred approximately one hour after Zelaya arrived at the Brazilian Embassy. Viana said that he offered Zelaya asylum but that Zelaya did not want it.

TENSIONS EASE, HEAVY RESTRICTIONS REMAIN

¶ 14. (C) Viana said that the security situation at the Brazilian Embassy had improved; electricity and water were turned back on, however the phone lines were still down but they somehow had access to the internet and their best means of communication was via cellular phones. The greatest worry to the Brazilians right now, he said, is that while people can leave the Embassy, they are not allowed to return. Viana expressed the GOB's appreciation for US assistance in providing a van to take most of their personnel out of the Embassy because the Honduran military is not allowing the operation of any vehicles associated with the Brazilian Embassy. Viana said that once the military expelled protestors who were in front of the Embassy, 300 Zelaya supporters jumped the fence and sought refuge in the Embassy. It was the Red Cross that brought three buses to the Embassy to ensure most of the protestors safe passage out of the Embassy. Currently, approximately 70 Zelaya supporters remain in the Brazilian Embassy.

BRAZIL REQUESTS INCREASED ASSISTANCE

¶ 15. (C) Viana asked for greater U.S. pressure on the Honduran government to ease their impositions on the Brazilian Embassy and on the international community to intervene. Viana said that the Brazilians in Honduras need to have free access into their Embassy use of their vehicles. The MRE is also looking to get a higher level Brazilian official into Honduras to help mediate the situation. However, they fear that the official will be barred from entering the Embassy. Viana also said that they hope an Organization of American States delegation will arrive in Honduras this weekend, but fear those individuals will also have difficulty entering the Brazilian Embassy. International flights should be allowed to enter Honduras starting this weekend, according to Viana.

¶ 16. (C) Viana explained that Brazil's current strategy was to involve the OAS and the international community in negotiations. He said Zelaya and the government in power in Honduras were not communicating at all. Zelaya communicates only with the Brazilians and press. The Brazilians in Honduras have only been able to communicate with Honduran military, and this has only developed recently due to assistance from the U.S. Embassy. Viana said that the best news he received so far was that the UN claimed the poor conditions in Honduras at this point suggest elections in November cannot be free and fair and have suspended election assistance. Viana said that increased pressure from the United States and the international community toward a solution is necessary.

BRAZIL PLAYS DOWN U.S. HELP, BLAMES CHAVEZ IN TALK WITH UK

¶ 17. (C) During PolOff's meeting with Viana, UK Embassy Charge and PolOff met with Mourao at MRE and recounted to PolOff that Mourao said they are extending to Zelaya "hospitality, not asylum." Mourao told them that, while they did not specifically ask the U.S. for any assistance, the U.S. Embassy in Honduras had been quite helpful. (Note: Viana communicated several requests for assistance to PolOff in

reftel.) Mourao told the British that the help they would like from the United States is in blocking remittances to Honduras as a way of pressuring the government in power, as, according to Mourao, 60 percent of remittances into Honduras come from the United States. Mourao also said the GOB believes Chavez was behind Zelaya's plan to appear at the Brazilian Embassy, and appeared irritated over this.

KUBISKE